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ABSTRACT

An example of a unit of study in social studies for the middle school using learning center experiences to enhance and enrich the learning process is provided. In the learning center approach to individualizing instruction, the teacher facilitates and guides, but the students are ultimately responsible for their own progress. This unit, intended for the "C" or middle range student, utilizes the contract method. The unit is based on Unit 5: "Man in His Environment" from the textbook "Sources of Identity" by Paul F. Brandewein, et al. (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.). Through a variety of individual activities, including viewing films, filling in maps, participating in group discussions, completing worksheets, and reading and discussing textbook selections, students learn about people who live in the deserts of the Middle East and Africa. The unit of study contains educational objectives, a pre-test, learning experiences, a posttest, additional learning experiences, and quest activities (enrichment activities including a world leaders center, a current events center, a maps and charts center, and a reading center). Appendices contain a module planning sheet and various student handouts for use in the unit. (RM)

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A LEARNING-CENTERED APPROACH TO MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES DEVELOPED AROUND A SEMI-CONTRACTUAL, MODULAR FORMAT

SO 013 145

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The learning center approach to individualizing instruction is one which, for some time now, has been used in varying degrees as a means of opening up the classroom. By "opening up" the classroom is not here necessarily meant to take down walls or have large open spaces, but to divide the traditional classroom into learning areas in order that both students and teacher have more options from which to learn and teach. In a classroom that uses a learning center approach, the teacher becomes a guider and facilitator of learning rather than an administrator of knowledge where the focus of attention is on the front of the room. Johnston, etal. (1978) write, "Traditionally, a teacher was portrayed as standing in front of a classroom lecturing, giving direcions, justifying authority, telling, criticizing, clarifying, monitoring, evaluating, and requiring of the students essentially reproductive behavior." However, by the effective use of learning centers, the focus, or responsibility for learning must rest with the learner. Although the teacher can facilitate and guide, the learners are ultimately responsible for their own progress. All educational efforts are concerned with both the 'product' and 'process' of learning...." Consequently, in a learning centered classroom, pupil and teacher become as partners in the learning process.

A study of the literature quickly reveals the following rationale for using learning centers in the classroom. Klingele (1979) says, "Learning centers are heavily relied upon to provide flexibility in the classroom. Learning centers...are concentrations of student activities focused in a particular area

of a classroom or school." Thomas (1975) describes learning centers as:

> ...any one area within the classroom itself established temporarily or permanently for the purpose of providing pupils with differentiated learning experiences in the form of individual or group activities to which pupils may be directed by the teacher or may be given the opportunity to select, manage, and evaluate the experiences of which the center is composed. The learning center may constitute an individual desk, a bulletin board or chalkboard, a table, a file cabinet, or a bookshelf. It may be teacher-constructed, pupil-constructed, or the result of a teacher-pupil effort.

Johnston, etal. (1978), describe a learning center as a "...designated area of a classroom that contains a variety of instructional materials and activities organized around a topic, theme, concept, or skill.... A learning center should provide activities that accommodate different interests and learning styles." In addition, John Dewey (1977) observes, "...if an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens iniative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense...," an individual will probably be driven to further learning in the future.

Therefore, using the learning center approach as described above, this paper will develop a unit for use in middle school social studies from a semi-contractual format.

The literature reveals that there are many styles and patterns of learning centers and, according to Thomas (1975), there are four categories into which these styles and patterns fit. They are: Motivational, Diagnostic, Prescriptive, and Enrichment.

A motivational center is a useful area of the classroom because it "...appeals to a pupils innate curiosity, it develops the pupils desire for peer approval, and it provides a rewarding environment." (Thomas, 1975)

The diagnostic center is used as a means of finding out what the pupils are all about. It is basically behavior oriented as the teacher observes the pupils' activities while they are experiencing a particular learning center.

The activities of the prescription center are determined by the findings of the diagnostic center. The experiences pupils undergo in the prescription type center will be the kinds of experiences that are at his ability level and rate of learning.

Enrichment centers ar numerous. Bascially, they are any kind of center that adds variety to and expansion of a facet of the classroom curriculum. Whereas, the motivational, the diagnostic, and the prescriptive focus at individualizing learning for the student at his level of ability, the enrichment center does this while at the same time attempting to broaden the student's knowledge of his world. An example of such a center in the social studies would be one that deals with current events. At this learning center would be found newspapers, magazines, pictures, filmstirps, recordings, books, etc. that deal with current events at all ability and interest levels.

The specific type of learning centers foreseen in this paper will be of the enrichment type, be based on inquiry and comparison, and be an integral part of a unit of instruction using the tree-sense approach (Klingele, 1979) It might be added

that this writer used such a design in his classroom, but without the added dimension of learning center experiences.

As mentioned before, the format is contractual in nature. The contract is based on 80% mastery of information and aimed at the "C" or middle range student. This does not, however, infer that the instruction cannot be aimed higher, or, perhaps, lower. In addition, no grade lower than "C" is earned. Concerning contracts, Aierstock (1978) writes, "...contracted responsibilities are not built one upon the other so that the more work that is accomplished, the higher the grade; rather, the quality of work is considered to be the criteria for academic achievement." This writer agrees and the learning unit as developed in this paper attempts to do what Aierstock describes. (See Appendix 1 for an example of the planning sheet.)

The design for instruction is as follows:

I. Unit: A topic covering a large segment of material comprising several concept areas.

II. Module: A logical grouping of concepts included in the larger unit topic. The module may be equated with a lesson plan but usually requires more than a single period for mastery learning.

III. Objectives: Objectives are in reality, statements of expected learning outcomes. These expected outcomes should include basic competencies needed for minimal mastery of the concept area.

IV. Learning Experiences: Learning experiences should be correlated with objectives. For each objective, state the learning experiences the student needs for mastery of that objective. Each learning experience should be stated so that students achieve the intent of the objective without further directions from the teacher. Materials to be used must be explicitly described.

V. Evaluation: Evaluation is needed for the student to know that she/he has achieved the objectives. The format of the evaluation may include oral questions, charts to be completed, problems to be solved, short discussion and objective test items. Whatever the evaluation format, an evaluation sequence must be correlated with each objective if mastery learning is to be attained for each student.

VI. Additional Learning Experiences: The additional learning experiences are remedial and should be constructed for the learning style of students who experience difficulty in learning. Additional learning experience must be available for each objective. The student repeats activities only for the objective(s) not previously achieved to complete the basic competencies required for minimal mastery of the basic concept area.

VII. Quest Activities: Activities ranging from highly interesting supplementary materials to independent research projects must be available for those students who demonstrate early mastery of the required objectives of the module. The nature and time for completion of these Quest Activities should be contracted between the student and the teacher.

The teacher develops a unit and then divides the unit into modules. Each module is designed so that no student earns less than a "C" grade, since according to the design, 80% is mastery. Each module begins with a pre-test and ends with a post-test. Any student who obtains an 80% score on the pre-test goes directly to the post-test. Any student who obtains less than 80% on the pre-test completes the entire module and then takes the post-test. Any students who obtains less than 80% on the post-test completes "Additional Learning Experiences" and takes a different, but similar, post-test--this post-test could possibly be a version of the original pre-test. The student who satisfactorily completes the module moves into the Quest Activities, and contracts for a higher grade, if she/he desires. Whereas some of the Module activities might involve the learning

centers, all Quest Activities are conducted from the learning centers.

The module described herein is based on the seventh grade social studies textbook Sources of Identity by Paul F. Brandewein, etal., and published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Unit 5: Man in His Environment

Module 1: People of the Desert

After completing this module students will be able to:

1. Compare cultural traditions of people who live in desert areas with those of the students.
2. Locate and name the nations of the Middle East and North Africa as listed by the teacher.
3. Discuss the available resources of people in the desert.

A. Pre-test: The pre-test is a direct result of the objectives listed above and the learning experiences.

B. Learning Experiences

1. Show films "The Middle East: Crossroads of Three Continents" (16mm, color or bw, 13 1/2 min.); "The Middle East" (16mm, color or bw, 13 min.).
   a. teacher led discussion of films.
   b. divide into groups--answer and discuss questions concerning films--answers are to be written and handed in.

2. Class is divided into groups--Each group is given blank maps of North Africa and the Middle East.
   a. fill in names of nations from list on chalkboard.
   b. locate and name major deserts (those that the teacher feels are important are listed on the chalkboard).
   c. locate and name major water ways (those that the teacher feels are important are listed on the chalkboard).
   d. color code nations, deserts, waterways.

3. Class is divided into groups.
   a. each group chooses a recording secretary and a chairperson-spokesperson.
   b. discuss questions on p. 6 of the texbook that deal with the pictures on p. 7.

c. each group shares its answers with the class through its spokesperson.

4. Read pages 6-13 in the textbook.
   a. individually, or with a partner, answer the questions on p. 14.

5. Using the worksheet "Cultural Traditions" (Appendix 2) compare the cultural traditions of people in the desert with your cultural traditions.

6. Using the worksheet "Foreign Adventure" (Appendix 3) imagine that you leave your home and inhabit a North African or Middle Eastern country.

7. From your reading and from the films, list 10 resources of people of the desert.

C. Post-test: The post-test is a direct result of the objectives listed above and the learning experiences.

D. Additional Learning Experiences: For those students who don't achieve mastery, additional activities, other readings, etc., are prescribed. Emphasis in prescription is centered on areas of weakness. Another post-test is administered.

1. Listen to teacher-made tape describing desert areas and the people who live there.
   a. tell the teacher about what you heard.

2. Read pages 327-333 in Our World and Its People.
   a. tell a classmate about what you read
      and then
   b. tell the teacher about what you read.

3. View filmstrip "What is the Middle East?"

4. Discuss the cultural traditions of the people of the desert with a classmate. Compare them with your traditions. Have the same discussion with your teacher.

E. Quest Activites: These activities are of an enrichment nature engaged in at the various social studies learning centers. Each Quest Activity may be contracted for a higher grade with the teacher. Directions are on 5x8 cards.)

1. World Leaders Center

   a. Card 1: Read about three of the following leaders--

1. Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran
2. Anwar Sadat of Egypt
3. Menachem Begin of Israel
4. King Saud of Saudi Arabia
5. King Hussein of Jordan
6. President Kaddafi of Libya
7. Go to Card 2.

b. Card 2: Choose two of the three leaders you read about on Card 1 and do one of the following--
   1. Write a paper comparing the views of each leader and report to the class or
   2. Tape your report and share it with three of your friends or
   3. With the help of your teacher, videotape your report like a news broadcast, and share it with the class.

2. Current Events Center

a. Card 1: Do Global News worksheet. (Appendix 4) or
b. Card 2: Do worksheet Top Political Story in the News. (Appendix 5) or
c. Card 3: Report about the problems Israel is having with Egypt and other Middle East nations. Do the following--
   1. Make a list of at least five questions that deal with the problems. Show the list to your teacher.
   2. Using your questions, interview a teacher from another class, a classmate, your parents, an adult friend that is not a relative.
   3. Compare their answers with your opinions on the same questions.
   4. Discuss your findings with your teachers.
   5. Draw some conclusions and share your findings with the class in one of the following ways--
      a. oral news report or
      b. video tape news report or
d. Card 4: Using the same pattern as Card 3, report about the problems Iran is having with Iraq.

3. Maps and Charts Center

a. Card 1: Construct a chart containing the following information for any four countries in the Middle East and North Africa. (Appendix 6)
   1. Area
   2. Population

3. Chief Exports
4. Chief Imports or

b. Card 2: Choose one country in the Middle East or North Africa and do the following--
   1. Draw a map of that country.
   2. On the map show the location of the Capitol city, other major population areas, agriculture areas, major industrial areas and industries, rivers and lakes, desert regions.

4. Reading Center

   a. Card 1: Read a book about Bedouins, about Aborigines, and about Pueblos. Compare the life styles of each group and present a report to the class. or
   b. Card 2: Read about the Islamic religion and report to the class.

This has been an example of a unit of study in social studies for the middle school using learning center experiences to enhance and enrich the learning process. It is possible (quite probable) that students involved in Quest Activities may not have completed their investigations by the end of Module I. However, these same Quest Activities could also be continued into Module II, or III, or IV, or whatever, if the student so wished. It is as important, in this writer's estimation, that students continue a topic of interest as it is to experience closure of an assignment or process. The end result may be more beneficial to both the student and to the class as a whole. John Dewey (1977) writes,

> ...experiences in order to be educative must lead out into an expanding world of subject-matter of facts or information and of ideas. This condition is satisfied only as the educator views teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience. This educator has a long look ahead, and views every present experience as a moving force in influencing what future experiences will be....

In similar vein, David Elkind (1977) says, "Educational programs, of whatever kind, must meet two basic yet contradictory human needs. One is the need for individuality, the striving of each person to be unique and to realize his or her full powers and potentials. The other is for human sociality: to relate to other people and to subordinate one's personal inclinations for the benefit of others." The purposes behind a learning unit such as the one described in this paper are to hopefully create atmospheres and experiences in classrooms and schools as described by Dewey and Elkind.

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APPENDIX 1

Module Planning Sheet

Purpose (Goal): _____

Specific Outcomes	Basic Learning Experiences	Assessment	Additional Learning Experiences	Quest Activities

APPENDIX 2

Cultural Traditions

Families must work together (cooperate with each other) to make a home and get all the chores done. Compare your family traditions and work habits with people who live in the desert regions of North Africa and the Middle East. Are they vastly different from yours? Use this chart to make your comparisons. You may draw pictures if you wish.

Categories	Desert Areas	Mine
Cooking		
Food Eaten		
Types of Transportation		
How People Get Clothes		
Lighting		
Medicines		

What are some of the chores young people your age might do in desert regions?

What are some chores young people in the United States might do that may not be done in desert regions?

Where do you think young people your age have to work harder? Why?

APPENDIX 3

Foreign Adventure

If you were to leave your home and move to a North Africa or Middle Eastern country:

1. What three ideas would you take with you?

   a.

   b.

   c.

2. What ten items would you consider as essential for your survival during the first year in the foreign country?

3. Get together with three classmates. Compare your lists and make a single list.

4. Who would you select to accompany you in this venture?

5. What rules of behavior would you insist upon during travel and the first year in this foreign country?

APPENDIX 4

Global News with the _____
(local paper)

1. Rank order the parts of the world according to the amount of coverage you believe each has received in the local papers in the last month

Regional Divisions:	My Rank Order:
West Europe	1.
East Europe	2.
Asia	3.
North Africa	4.
South America	5.
Central America	6.
Canada	7.
Middle East	8.

2. What part(s) of the world seem to be having the most consequences for your future?

3. What part(s) of the world do you believe will have the most consequences for you in the year 2000?

4. Identify the type of events you feel most likely will have the most consequences for you and then discuss these with two of your friends and your teacher.

5. What global problems do you see as a result of the previous questions? Consult your teacher for assistance.

APPENDIX 5

Top Political Stories in the News

In your opinion, what has been the top political story dealing with North Africa or the Middle East during the past month?

Top Story:

Why Chosen:

Why do you think this happened?

How important is this story to the people in Ann Arbor and/or Michigan?

How important is it to the lives of people in other parts of the world? Where, specifically?

How important is it to our own lives?

Will it continue to be an important story in the Future? Why? Why not?

What do you think might happen next?

APPENDIX 6

Information Chart

Country	Area	Population	Chief Exports	Chief Imports

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IDENTIFIERS Consciousness Raising; Study Circles

ABSTRACT

Feminist Research Methodology Groups (FRMGs) have developed as a specific type of women's group in which feminist academics can find supportive audiences for their work while contributing to a feminist redefinition of research methods. An analysis of two FRMGs reveals common characteristics, dynamics, and outcomes. Both were limited to small groups which functioned without a leader. A different woman was responsible for the structure and content of each meeting. Discussion usually centered on how that woman's current research could be redeveloped from a feminist perspective. So that all could participate, subject materials were circulated prior to each meeting. Members noted several positive aspects of this format. Having no leader meant that no one dominated meetings. Members were sharing and supportive, drawing each other out in an intellectual environment that was relaxed but challenging. While one of these groups is still in operation, the other has disbanded for several reasons, including divergent motivation, group dynamics, and turnover. However, in both cases leaving members felt they were graduating as resocialized feminist researchers. Women contemplating forming FRMGs should address several challenges, among them the need to develop a definition and paradigm for these groups. (LP)

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FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODOLOGY GROUPS:

ORIGINS, FORMS, FUNCTIONS

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FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODOLOGY GROUPS:

ORIGINS, FORMS, FUNCTIONS

INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that a key factor in the success of the current women's movement was the creation of consciousness-raising (CR) groups on the grass-roots level in the late 1960s. Yates (1975) explains that consciousness-raising was a deliberate method from its inception in Chicago and New York in 1968. Although well-known now as an integral component of women's liberation, these groups were actually modelled on ideas of the social movements of the preceding decade (Freeman, 1979: 559). More precisely,

> Carol Hanisch and Kathie Amatniek [of New York Radical Women] had become impressed during their year in Mississippi with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee by the way in which black people spoke up in testimonials about what had been done to them by 'the Man'. They also reminded themselves of Mao's slogan, 'Speak to relieve the pain' (Yates, 1975: 103). [After these spontaneous beginnings,]Redstockings, in conjunction with its 'prowoman line,' formulated the first full guidelines for consciousness-raising. The document, called 'Protective Rules for Consciousness-raising' and written in 1968, was read at the beginning of each session. The rules stipulate that each sister must testify on the question at hand, that others must not break off any sister's testimony until it is complete, and that judgments on a sister's testimony are not allowed. Sisters must give compelling reasons for urging points of view. Generalizations are to be drawn

> after testimonies are complete, placing the question in its political context, and position papers are to be written about the group's conclusions. Consciousness-raising in more or less the form developed by Redstockings swept the movement in the next two years and for many women's liberation groups became either their basis for forming or one part of their effort (Yates, 1975:104).

CR groups developed concurrently throughout the country. Topics for discussion included abortion, housework, sexual relations, child care, marriage, shopping, making office coffee, curtailing ambitions, getting educated and more (Yates, 1975:103). The purpose of CR groups was to help each woman examine her own experience within the larger framework which interprets one woman's experience as shared in some ways by all women because of the dynamics of societal oppression. In CR groups women recognized the importance of their personal experience and discovered their potential for political analysis and possible action.

In addition to ideology, particular group procedures made consciousness-raising a political activity as well as a form of therapy. First of all, women's statements were defined as testimonies about a social ill as well as disclosures of personal troubles. Second, participants were defined as sisters in a worldwide community of women interested in change. Third, everyone was considered to be an expert on the chosen topic and thus all were expected to testify. Moreover, since everyone had insights into the topic at hand, everyone's contribution was seen as valuable. Fourth, a rule was followed whereby a speaker was not interrupted until she had finished speaking. Since women tend to be interrupted by men (Henley, 1977), to not interrupt was considered a first step in the direction of raising a woman's

self-esteem. Fifth, a rule was adopted that women would not offer judgments, criticism, or advice concerning other women's presentations. This rule enabled speakers to speak freely without fear of being criticized; it facilitated self-disclosure. This rule was probably incorporated from the encounter movement which encouraged people to experience each other's participation without evaluating it. Groups tried to equalize the amount of time all members spoke. And finally, the task of the group was to link individual testimonies with larger political generalizations.

The groups usually met weekly, were composed of between five and fifteen members, and were leaderless. But as described above, one can easily see that they were not structureless. The power of these group processes was such that in many cases, CR groups later converted into groups which created new services for women or engaged in political lobbying or other forms of change-oriented action. In essence, CR groups were resocialization groups for women. They were a solution to the isolation that women felt even if they were married and had children. In isolation they had not formulated what they felt or needed, let alone compared these with other people's experiences. In the CR groups their loneliness was transformed into sisterhood, their guilt and shame into rage and anger, and their competition against one another into mutual support.

CR groups are still being formed by women's centers throughout the country (see Lieberman, Solow, Bond and Reibstein, 1981). In addition, drawing on the background of CR groups, there is now a proliferation of new types of groups with specific functions. Called simply "women's groups" they serve women who may have already gone through an initial CR experience and are now looking for support in a particular life area, such as being a graduate

student, being a professional woman, writing a doctoral dissertation, coping with new motherhood, or coping with unemployment. Women's groups usually organize around one specific issue rather than deal with the full range of issues raised in CR groups. Feminist women's groups represent a blend of influences including CR, encounter, and self-help. These groups are significant as the building blocks in a new culture of women's institutions such as networks, publishing houses, bookstores, music festivals, art galleries, conferences, professional associations, journals and more. In addition, they are significant because they produce positive change in women.

The purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze one type of "women's group," namely a Feminist Research Methodology Group (FRMG). The discussion will focus on the dynamics of these groups rather than the content of feminist research methodology which I have discussed elsewhere (Reinharz, 1979, 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1983a). The material on which I draw for this analysis is my founding membership in two of these groups in two different cities, my correspondence and discussion with numerous colleagues involved in similar groups, and the feedback I've gotten from talks about these groups at several women's conferences. First I will describe the characteristics of two FRMGs. Then I will briefly differentiate the characteristics of the FRMG from related groups such as CR, therapy, networks, encounter and support groups. I will then conclude by discussing the reasons for the first group's disbanding, the effect of the FRMGs on members, the significance of the FRMG and challenges for the future.

FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODOLOGY GROUPS

GROUP ONE

The origins of the first of the two FRMGs to be described here began in spring 1980 when a group of University of Michigan women graduate students from numerous academic departments drove to the National Women's Studies Association annual conference in Bloomington, Indiana. Many sessions they attended were devoted to issues of research methodology and its transformation within a feminist perspective. On their return ride, these women decided to pursue their interest in feminist research methodology in various ways. At first they spoke of editing a book together, then one of them agreed to call a meeting of a larger group of women who would decide which course of action to take.

In December 1980, an informal brunch was held for about ten graduate students and faculty who had been invited personally by the organizer or who had seen fliers posted about the brunch. People were recruited who identified themselves as feminists and were concerned with research methodology. During the brunch numerous suggestions for discussing methodology were considered. The conclusion reached was to have those present form a group which would meet weekly. According to a prearranged weekly schedule, each member would present a talk on the dominant paradigm of her discipline, would explaine the feminist critique(s), and describe a feminist alternative to the mainstream.

In essence the people who gathered agreed to constitute a small group whose members would educate one another. A small group has been defined as between two and about fifteen individuals who have face-to-face contact, interact with one another, and affect each other's behavior (Hare, 1976:4). Groups develop only if members share motives and goals, if a set of norms

emerges to limit behavior, and if a system of feelings among members is created. These characteristics of small groups are mentioned here to contrast the FRMG with other possible structures such as lecture series or professional organizationsin which discontinuous membership and lack of regular face-to-face interaction may not lead to the development of norms and thus to personal change.

The fact that this was to be an all-female group was critical for the resocialization effect that was to develop. If men are present in groups of women, women have a tendency to adopt the socio-emotional role in contrast to men's task-oriented one (Parsons and Bales, 1955; Strodtbeck and Mann, 1956). In mixed-sex discussion, encounter and task groups, women are likely to overlook other women as they attempt to engage the attention of the men. In mixed groups women interact very little among themselves (Aries, 1977:295). Research has shown that in mixed-sex groups males initiate and receive more interaction than females, whereas in all-female groups, women share intimacies and speak at length about things meaningful to them (Aries, 1977:294).

The fact that in our planning meeting we assumed we could educate each other was the initial step in our conveyance of mutual respect. It also signified disregard for our hierarchical statuses in the university. We were able to value each other rather than have disdain for the ideas of women (Goldberg, 1968) because each of us had already internalized a feminist perspective. The fact that everyone agreed to present represented an important step in the process of empowerment because several of the members had had very little previous experience presenting their thoughts publicly.

At a follow-up organizational meeting, we discussed the format our group would use, i.e. the norms we agreed to follow. We decided that we wanted to

remain a small group and therefore would not expand our membership beyond ten people. If others wanted to join, we would encourage and help them start additional groups. Second, we each agreed to have a strong commitment to the group in terms of attendance, punctuality, preparation and participation for one semester. We agreed to pool resources to buy tape cassettes so that we could tape-record each session. This week's session's tapes would be transcribed by last week's presenter and would be copied so that each could have a copy. Thus we would have a running record of our work as a group and each presenter would have a record of the group's discussion of her presentation. During the first year, meetings occurred weekly for two hours in the office of one member. Attendance was nearly perfect at each session.

The transcripts were of great value to each presenter in improving the quality of her work after her presentation. Also, in the process of transcribing the tapes, the transcriber gained new insights about the quality of our interaction. For instance, she was able to note the extensive outbursts of laughter, the group's peculiar use of language, or the soft-spokenness of a shy member. We laughed out of our shared anger at our discomfort with many aspects of patriarchal university life. Our laughter, like the laughter of any group, served to lessen social distance among us and bring us closer together as a group (Neitz, 1980). Laughter similarly released tension (for a discussion of the extensive laughter in women's encounter groups, see Meador, Solomon and Bowen, 1972). Transcribers frequently commented on their transcription insights, both in written additions on the transcripts themselves, and verbally in front of the group at a subsequent meeting. These comments enhanced our group dynamics and our feminist understanding. They enabled us to be more reflective about how we were functioning as a group and as individuals.

The original membership of the group included eight graduate students, one assistant professor, and one clinician who was also a post-doctoral researcher. The fields represented by the participants included demography, social work, various subfields of psychology, Asian studies, economics, American studies, and anthropology. In the second year of the FRMG, four of the original members left (one to do dissertation fieldwork in Appalachia and three because they needed more time to do their own work). The vacancies were filled by one full professor, one assistant professor and one associate director of a research institute. All of these individuals were connected with the University of Michigan. All new members were carefully chosen on the basis of their feminist orientation, their contribution to the heterogeneity of the group in terms of academic discipline and rank, and their perceived group skills. In the third year, some members left the group because they left town. They were replaced in a similar way. Currently the group does not meet regularly although there is interest among some of the members to build a new group similar to the original one.

By intention the group represented a range of disciplines, although we would have liked to avoid the fact that the social sciences predominated, the humanities were barely represented, and the physical sciences were not represented at all. The predominance of the social sciences stems from the fact that women are over-represented in those fields as compared with the physical sciences (Feldman, 1974:ch. 3) and that the organizer began the group by approaching her friends in Women's Studies where there is a similar clustering of women from the humanities and social sciences. The effort to have numerous disciplines represented in the group spoke to our belief that a feminist perspective on any research question should have a multi-disciplinary

orientation. In addition, to include women from various departments would allow us to build bridges among women who were likely not to know one another.

The most difficult preliminary issue for the group was to find a meeting time. Not only was this a logistical problem but it also raised issues of mutual trust because each person had to state at which times she was truly unavailable rather than merely inconvenienced. We had to weigh the diverse constraints of women with different lifestyles and at different life stages.

We assured everyone's participation by setting up a roster in advance. This schedule of presentations prevented the formation of a status hierarchy within the group, in keeping with the culture of most feminist organizations (Riger, 1981). The group process that we planned was designed to give everyone a chance to speak and be heard, and at the same time yield a worthwhile in-depth discussion, not one reduced to the lowest-common-denominator. We did not have a system which compelled everyone to speak at every session (i.e. a "round"). We preferred spontaneity and reverted to the "round" only if a particular individual wanted to receive feedback to her presentation in that form. Each session was defined as belonging to the presenter to do with as she wished.

Research on all-female groups has shown that women tend to adopt this style of sharing and not dominating one another. In all female groups women tend to draw each other out, rather than ignore quieter members (Aries, 1977: 183). In addition, in contrast with men in all-men groups, women have been shown to adopt an anticompetitive norm in all-female groups. They develop norms that allow everyone to benefit (Shaw, 1981:183). For example, Uesugi and Vinacke (1963) found that "women subjects adopted rotation systems and

alliances which included everybody, in contrast to men subjects who made the best deals under the circumstances" (Shaw, 1981:183).

We prevented the deterioration of the presentations to a low-level discussion by having the presenter circulate materials relevant to her presentations at least a week in advance. This literature, usually accompanied by a cover letter containing key questions the presenter wanted to address, allowed everyone to come to sessions prepared. In the first year of the group, each session was used to define a discipline's dominant paradigm and the feminist critique. During the subsequent years, members presented a project they were currently working on, intellectual interests, or working ideas.

The ability to provide a frequent, highly interested and appreciative audience for one another's work was one small antidote to the treatment of women in the professions and academy. Numerous studies have shown that men are less likely to attend a talk given by a woman regardless of her rank or reputation and if they attend, they are likely to interrupt her (see for example, Solomon, 1976). In addition, men's humor has been shown to be based extensively on degradation of women's cognitive functioning, in particular by preferring women to be sexual rather than intellectual (Ransohoff, 1981).

Presenters distributed materials ranging from a rough draft of a working paper, an outline of a lecture to be given, or a rejected grant proposal that was being reworked for resubmission. There were no demands made by the group concerning the level of completion of the presenter's work. We simply assumed that each presenter would have something valuable to say and that she could present it. Interestingly, we found that despite the camaraderie and support we offered each other, presenters felt some anxiety prior to presenting. This was not so much a reflection of possible failure but rather a desire to inform

the group effectively. We were pleased that although the group was experienced by us as supportive, it still engendered enough anxiety to have people exert sufficient effort to prepare excellent presentations. Like all good educational or resocialization contexts, our group combined support with challenge. In several cases the presenter's anxiety, which stemmed from preparing her presentation for the group or other audiences, became part of the material she presented. We tried to understand why some of us become anxious about working/speaking/writing and how we might overcome this difficulty or change the structures surrounding our work. (This concern has developed into a dissertation topic for one member, i.e., why do many women continue to experience anxiety about their work although they have achieved considerable success?) Anxiety also reflected the difficulty graduate students face when being socialized in the mainstream tradition on the one hand and feeling drawn to a critical perspective on the other. Two members of our group seemed sufficiently anxious to bar benefitting from the group.

During our first two sessions we adopted a very serious tone, reviewed the work of other writers, and argued the merits of their cases in conventional, detached ways (for a bibliography, see Reinharz, Bombyk and Wright, 1983). The following session the presenter offered a better model. She couched her presentation in the context of her own socialization and informed us about the salience of the paradigm conflict for her own work. She included in her talk a description of the process of presenting her work before a mixed-gender group. In response to her talk, there was much sharing of similar experiences, affect and good humor. From then on we adopted this presentation format - we presented our ideas within the context of the experience of doing one's work.

By design, we did not serve refreshments at our meetings so as to avoid having our energies diverted or slipping into conventional feminine behavior which always puts nurturing before intellectual work. Also we all felt pressed for time. However, about a third of the way through the semester, people began bringing inexpensive store-bought snacks. At the end of the semester we also held a few celebratory pot-lucks where we engaged in good dining and enjoyable conversation. During our formal meetings we tried to minimize social talk although we did reserve a few minutes at the end of the meeting for announcements of common interest. We also made a commitment to not have a subgroup of the group meet independently of our sessions to continue discussing our ideas because we wanted to preserve the sense that we were a group of equals with equivalent exposure to each other's ideas. This small agreement was much appreciated by those members who had to rush off after sessions to pick their children up from day-care and would thus have to consistently miss the continued discussions the rest of the group could afford to have.

The group discussions focussed on explaining the dominant paradigm of one discipline, explaining what feminists find lacking in that model, and how a particular woman was dealing with the issue. None of us had a predefined "feminist theory or feminist methodology line" which she wanted to impose on anyone, nor did the group reach consensus about feminist theory or methodology. In fact there was wide divergence among members, some of whom felt closer to the dominant paradigm and some of whom felt more distant. But because of the group dynamics and the multidisciplinary context of our discussions, these differences became less sharp over time. In terms of methodology itself, a perspective each of us had was reinforced, i.e., that to be a feminist is to

question the authority of received wisdom in our disciplines concerning method. (Haim's research on science career aspirants led him to the conclusion that a student's attitude toward his discipline's authority, i.e. accepting or resisting it, is critical in determining one's identity as a scientist, Haim, 1983.) The specific direction this questioning of authority would lead each of us varied.

GROUP TWO

This group formed because one woman felt a painful discontinuity in her life between her great success as a mainstrem researcher in a male-dominated hospital on the one hand and her feminist activism on the other hand. A friend of hers who had been unable to find an academic appointment in her highly specialized field and had thus recently retrained as a lawyer, was also looking for a place to validate her identity as a feminist and researcher. They had a small party in their home and invited a few friends whom they suspected would be interested in forming a FRMG. The author's experience in the Michigan group was known to these women and at the party she was asked to describe that group. She stressed the need for mutual commitment and for adequate preliminary discussion of the group's procedures and goals.

Those present who were able to make the commitment were asked to meet again and bring a friend who might be interested. At our first preparatory meeting there were eight women and it was decided that we would close the membership with this number. Seven had the Ph.D., one had a B.A. and was considering re-entering school to earn a higher degree. Closed group membership, although a controversial position to take in the feminist movement, seemed to assure us that we could develop greater group cohesiveness.

This group was somewhat less diversified in terms of disciplinary affiliation than the first FRMG (all were sociologists or psychologists except one humanist lawyer). On the other hand, it was more diversified in terms of class background, ethnicity, religion and explicit sexual orientation. Although the membership of the first FRMG was also diversified along these dimensions, in the first FRMG these were not issues that were brought out extensively to deepen the methodology discussion. In the second group, these differences were brought continuously into the research analysis itself. In fact there was a deliberate effort made to consider how a feminist orientation is built on acknowledging these differences among women.

For this FRMG two sessions were needed to come to agreement on group size, number of meetings and scheduling. Some of these matters were dealt with very efficiently because we could use the model of the first FRMG. But some of the work of forming group cohesion took longer than in the first FRMG because many of us were strangers to one another. In the first group almost everyone knew everyone else to some extent and many had been close friends for years. Thus in the second group, a preliminary meeting was spent in a round of self-disclosure which not only provided members with information about one another but engendered trust. We used the question - what brought you to the current point in your work? People usually began their stories with their parents' origins, how their parents and they had been reared, and the cultural environment of their formative years. Thus these women's perception of their work was couched in the context of their whole life. It was "personal" even if the subject matter of their current research did not relate to their current experience. This round of responses to the single question

showed us that we had many shared concerns - it also evoked a great deal of laughter and shared pain.

The preparatory meeting raised two other interesting issues. The first was that because some of us were strangers, we wanted to determine that we were not in competition with each other by virtue of our position outside the group. We discussed the fact that some of us wanted the group to serve as a substitute for the camaraderie that was absent in her place of work partially because of the competition among women there. The second issue was that some of us were concerned that several members spoke of their great needs (for emotional support, for funds, for colleagues, for research design ideas, etc.) and not of what they could offer others. If there was a large discrepancy among the levels of neediness of different members, the less needy ones would feel they were gaining little from the group. In response to seeing this, group members resolved that this was not to be a therapy group to deal with personal problems but a research group to deal with issues of how each of us could produce the best possible research of which she was capable, and how that would/could be guided by a feminist worldview. As it turned out, this issue of an imbalance in the levels of neediness disappeared once the presentations began because the structure of presenting compelled every member to offer her ideas to the group. While it is true that each presentation focussed on the current project of the participant in the context of her situation and plans, it did not focus on the person's emotional life. Because the presentations were delivered in a contextual, rather than in a context-stripped manner (Mishler,1979), however, they were personally meaningful to all of us.

This FRMG group does not examine the paradigms of disciplines but rather is a forum for members to discuss their work. We circulate papers in advance along with key questions we would like the group to address. The key questions are what distinguishes this FRMG from an ordinary research support group because the key questions are always concerned with how a particular piece of work could be reinterpreted, revised, or developed within a feminist framework. For instance, one woman has recently completed her doctoral dissertation which, although it dealt with women, employed a conventional research design. She is now preparing some articles for publication and wants to submit one to a feminist popular journal. How could she discuss the same issues in a different way? Another woman, the lawyer, appended the following questions to the article she circulated: 1) What is the nature and function of law and of legal institutions? 2) Can women be said to have a particular approach to solving the problems addressed by the need for law and, if so, how would those problems be solved differently in a woman-defined context? 3) What sort of methodologies might one use to construct a feminist jurisprudence?

Each presenter structures the evening as she wishes. We meet approximately every three weeks and have almost no food at our meetings. There have been several delicious potlucks on other occasions. This group has met long enough so that each member has presented once. Spontaneously in the last session or two some members began to express the personal changes they had experienced since participating in the group. In the next section, I will discuss similarities and differences between these FRMGs and related groups. Then I will discuss outcomes for participants.

COMPARISONS WITH OTHER TYPES OF GROUPS

Jessie Bernard's (1981) massive study of the female world includes a discussion of the variety of groups formed by women. She explains that feminist groups provide surrogate support for the family whose functions have eroded. While this may be true, feminist groups also have an educational resocialization function, i.e. they change women by enabling them to become freer of the normative constraints of their environment. These groups come in numerous varieties.Here I will discuss CR, encounter,networks,and therapy groups.

The FRMGs adopted certain features of CR groups in that membership was small (fewer than 12) and leaderless. Generally everyone had a chance to speak at each meeting, participation was confined to women, and members were supportive yet challenging of each other. Unlike CR groups, however, the FRMGs did not follow a set of guidelines which informs many CR groups (Perl and Abarbanel, 1976), nor did the participants of the FRMG see the primary purpose of the group as the exploration of personal experience. The FRMGs were similar to encounter groups in that they were small and the participants were interested in personal growth and change, but they were unlike encounter groups in that they did not involve an examination of the relations among the members or of the here-and-now, nor did they engage the services of a professional group leader, nor use a group process by which any discussion topic at all was allowed to emerge from the interaction of the members (Back, 1972). This is not to deny that encounter groups for women are powerful vehicles for women to change their perceptions of the world and bond with other women (Meador, Solomon and Bowen, 1972).

The FRMGs were different from a member's social network whether it be informal (Mitchell and Trickett, 1980) or formal (Daniels, 1979) in that

networks are usually larger and less pointed in their overall goals. Networks do not usually have regularly schedule frequent meetings that have an intellectual purpose. On the other hand, the FRMGs share with social networks the quality of generating a great deal of support in the form of mutual attachment, social integration (as members began to include each other in their activities), nurturance, reassurance of worth, sense of alliance, and concrete guidance (Mitchell and Trickett, 1980).

The FRMGs were similar to a study group in that the primary purpose was intellectual. But to the extent that members felt free to discuss personal experiences when these were pertinent, that the membership was comprised of women only, that members presented their own, sometimes unfinished work, and that there was an affiliation with a larger social movement, made them somewhat different from a conventional study group.

Perhaps they were most similar to self-help or support groups, particularly in their small size, the regularity of the members' face-to-face contact in a group meeting, and the definition of the purpose of the group as "members supporting each other's exploration of feminist methodology and furtherance of her own work." In an excellent discussion of the significance of support groups for women, the Michigan Department of Mental Health Task Force on Women defined a support group as a group in which "women share common problems and provide each other with mutual aid, thereby developing new support systems. In addition, support groups provide not only emotional support but education as well. Furthermore, the synthesis of support and education has a direct relationship to problem-solving" (Michigan Department of Mental Health, 1982: 4). But the FRMGs were also dissimilar to support groups in that the latter are frequently established by professionals operating out of a community mental

health center or hospital, or by national advocacy organizations. Whereas people join support groups because of pressing needs, people joined the FRMG also out of intellectual interest and excitement. Not all came to solve personal problems. Support groups have consistently demonstrated positive changes in memberships (see Schwartz, 1975), a fact reflected also in their wide popularity.

Interestingly, these positive changes in women have not been as well documented in professional psychotherapy groups in which a medical model of helping is used (see Rousanville, Lifton and Bieber, 1979). In recognition of this problem, consciousness-raising is being advocated over group psychotherapy for women by feminist psychotherapists. And as stated above the Michigan Department of Mental Health recommends support groups for women instead of psychotherapy. Brodsky informally compared the behavior of women in CR groups with those in all-female group therapy. She states that CR groups engender "a sense of trust in other women and a closeness based on common problems" (1981:575) whereas all-female therapy groups were characterized by cattiness, aggressiveness and competition. In group psychotherapy, the drop-out rate is high and loyalty and intimacy is not easily achieved.

The FRMG shares with activist feminist organizations the desire to go beyond facilitating individual changes. Specifically, our interest in tackling the question of how feminists could do research from a feminist perspective represented a collaborative effort which we were engaging in for the sake of the movement generally. We hoped to produce products that would help other researchers or would be of interest to those who read scholarly material. This goal, which transcended individual goals, made our group somewhat of a task force although it was not connected to a larger association. Some of the

products that emerged from the first FRMG (aside from substantive work such as dissertations or chapters) included workshops which we offered on feminist methodology (to the Great Lakes College Association Annual National Training Institute in Women's Studies, 1981, 1982), a published bibliography (Reinharz, Bombyk and Wright, 1983), a series of lectures (Contratto, 1981), conference presentations (Reinharz, 1981; Contratto, 1983; Bombyk, 1983; Jayaratne, 1983; and Reinharz, 1983a), newsletter columns (Reinharz, 1983b), and other lectures in universities and women's groups. Thus, in some ways we were the informal grass-roots component of the larger formal associations which might deal specifically with feminist methodology, such as the Association for Women in Psychology, Sociologists for Women in Society, and the National Women's Studies Association.

MOTIVATIONS AND OUTCOMES

The outcomes of FRMGs should be judged in relation to the motivations members had for joining and the goals for which the groups were organized. The motivations and outcomes were personal, intellectual and social. Women came to find an informed sympathetic audience for their questions and work. They came to learn about the feminist perspectives in other disciplines and how these could be integrated in their own. They came to support other women and receive their support, to assuage academic loneliness as faculty (Furniss and Graham, 1974) or as graduate students (Feldman, 1974); to associate with role models, to be integrated in a network of scholars, to find support for doing something new professionally, to contribute to a shared definition of feminist methodology, and to continue previous friendships. They came to develop a place of their own on the outskirts of the male preserve of academia,

a place where they could experiment with new ideas and new values (Janeway, 1975). All of these goals were achieved. In addition in most cases women in the FRMGs experienced increased self-esteem particularly with regard to their ability to do significant work. Or if they had no difficulties in this area, they felt enhanced in their ability to continue their work. These are some of the very same personal motivations and group goals of women's educational institutions which have been shown to be very effective in enhancing women's self-esteem and leading them to effective careers (Tidball, 1975; Churgin, 1978). The effect on women of being in single-sex small group settings is partially responsible for the changes that occur.

Another element contributing to the effectiveness of the FRMG is related to the use of CR techniques. The effects on members of participation in CR groups has been studied albeit to a limited extent. In his interviews which compared women who participated in such groups with those who did not, Cherniss (1972) found that the former group developed a feeling of autonomy vis a vis men and a sense of community with other women. The women in the CR group were active, assertive, achievement-oriented and goal-oriented. They had high self-esteem. Although Cherniss' design could not determine if such people were drawn to the group or were affected by the group, the women themselves experienced their changes as a result of the group process (see also Micossi, 1970).

Lieberman, Solow, Bond and Reibstein (1981) studied CR groups in the framework of their larger investigation of the self-help movement and their large-scale survey of CR group participants (Lieberman and Bond, 1976). The research group administered a questionnaire to women entering CR groups organized among strangers by women's centers. Eventually a sample of 32

women was obtained who were given a pre-group questionnaire and a follow-up questionnaire after 6 months. Twenty-four women also agreed to a lengthy telephone interview for an additional follow-up. The primary motivation for joining the group was "'an interest in women's issues' (e.g. to share thoughts and feelings about being a woman, to learn about other women and their experiences...) (and) 'help-seeking' concerns...'to get relief from things or feelings that trouble me,' 'to sole personal problems' and 'to bring about some change in myself'" (Lieberman et al., 1981:585). Target problems in this sample were self-concept (i.e. self-esteem, assertiveness, identity) and interpersonal functioning.

Lieberman and his colleagues found that CR groups help women improve their self-attitudes but were limited in promoting other chnages in psychological functioning (1981:589). The mean distress measured on target problems was significantly decreased and the mean level of self-esteem significantly increased (1981:589), but symptoms or coping styles remained unchanged. Thirty-five percent of the women reported important career or interpersonal change. Lieberman and his associates believe that the groups supported these life changes initiated by the participants but did not initiate the specific changes themselves (e.g. a woman would receive support if she decided to divorce but would not be advised to seek a divorce if she was having marital troubles). The same phenomenon occurred in the FRMG - women were supported in the intellectual directions they decided to take rather than being advised to take certain steps. The authors conclude that the impact of CR groups is unique: they do not reduce symptoms (as in psychotherapy, they claim), do not lead to personal growth (as in encounter groups, they claim) but do lead to a reassessment of the self, evidenced in "increased self-esteem, renewed self-respect and acknowledgment of self-importance" (1981:595).

From the role of social worker, Davis (1977) studied a unique informal monthly luncheon CR group in a lower-middle class California community which had no other feminist groups. Attendance varied from two to 20 women per meeting. There were two rules - women only and confidentiality. No minutes were taken, no fees collected, no leaders elected, no children allowed. Members passed a hat for donations to cover babysitting expenses. Women shared their experiences, and sometimes speakers were invited. The group went on to sponsor a one-day workshop on the needs of the women of their town, a health fair, sent a woman to attend the town's Chamber of Commerce for two years, and supported women who sought their help. Several members attended the International Women's Conference in Mexico City in 1975. Smaller spin-off support groups to deal with problems of re-entering women and displaced homemakers were formed. Whereas these women formerly had been completely isolated from one another, they now called each other for mutual assistance, initiated projects through the community mental health center, formed a Women Against Rape group with a 24-hour hot line, and more. The major effects of this group, then, were the break-down in social isolation and alienation and the replacement of a sense of powerlessness with a feeling of competence (see Reinharz, 1983 c). According to Davis (1977), the increase in women's social networks and in their problem solving abilities made it easier for them to deal with role transitions. The impact of CR groups as documented here has been paralleled by the impact on women of membership in self-help groups (see Michigan Department of Mental Health, 1982).

The impact of the FRMG has been to achieve the group goals listed above and to help women achieve individual goals related to their own research. For instance one member has written: "...my rediscovery of the potential of

feminist clinical research which was only possible with the ongoing support and inquiry of the feminist methodology seminar has brought me to a new point in my thinking and writing. Not only am I able to address questions of vital interest to me but I am able, I think, to do so in a way which breaks down traditional subject/object problems" (Contratto, 1983:9). The group helped each of us in the continuing process of establishing our own identity.

DISBANDING

As was mentioned earlier the first FRMG has disbanded. One contributing factor was turnover of members because some of us moved out of town. More significant, however, were two other factors. First, I have argued that the group was created because it met the needs of individual members to resolve some difficulty they were encountering in their work or to provide a forum for addressing questions about feminist methodology. The first need was eliminated for some people by changes that occurred in themselves. Specifically, several members resolved which kinds of research they wished to do and how they would do it. Several overcame the obstacles that had been preventing them from recognizing how to settle on a dissertation topic. Several resolved relationships with associates or found more compatible departments that enabled them to make progress on their own work. Among some of the second and third set of members in the first FRMG, the need for the group was not always clear-cut. Some had joined simply for curiosity or companionship. Some of these women did not give a presentation or make a long-term commitment and thus dropped out.

Thus divergent motivations, group dynamics, and turnover led to a disbanding of the group. In a sense the group disbanded because it achieved its

purpose. Were it to be re-established, members would have to determine if there were identifiable needs that could be met by an FRMG. The second FRMG is still meeting and at a recent session which celebrated the completion of one round of presentations, a commitment was voiced to go through a second round with the same membership except one replacement for a woman who will be working abroad.

Like therapy groups, the purpose of the FRMG is not to create dependence. But like women's groups, it is desirable that deep attachments form among members. We have found in the first FRMG that when the group is no longer needed, the attachments will persist among members who continue to work together in other contexts. It is symbolic that at two celebration dinners marking the departure of two members, the rest of the group presented them with the gift of a tee-shirt with the words "feminist methodologist" on the front. Thus to leave the group is to graduate as a resocialized feminist researcher.

REMAINING CHALLENGES

Several challenges face FRMGs. First, it would be useful for members of FRMGs to share information about successful models and disseminate these so that others could adopt and/or modify them. This has already been done informally to a limited extent (e.g. people who happen to have heard about the group write for information and then set up their own, such as occurred at Cornell University). Also members of audiences who have heard descriptions of the FRMG have said they wanted to go home and establish their own. However, other steps could be taken: a model could be written for one of the feminist professional associations and brought to the attention of its members, in the

same way that Perl and Abarbanell (1976) wrote guidelines for CR groups. This dissemination would be valuable in helping to provide one preventive measure for the distress experienced by some women in academia. Pauline Bart (1982) and others have shown how difficult it is to withstand exclusion from one's chosen profession just because one's style and/or interests are not the dominant ones. Women are a minority group in academia, a minority group with rising expectations in a social system with shrinking capacities to absorb newcomers and with persistent sexism (Hu-DeHart, 1982). These structural conditions mean that women are crowded in the lower ranks, with few role models in the higher ranks, with pressures to compete among each other, and thus with little chance for solidarity. The lack of solidarity leads to further isolation and stress sometimes expressed in writing blocks, turning to students for support, or even self-destruction (Mausner and Steppacher, 1973). Every woman academic need not join a FRMG but she should have one or something like it available to her for support if she wants it.

Second, it might be worthwhile for members of these groups to formulate a definition of feminist research methodology based on their work. Although some efforts in this direction are being made, there are also barriers. Particularly, some of us have come to believe that feminist research methodology is not a specific set of guidelines for research but rather a continuing process engaged in by feminists that combines a critical analysis of mainstream research and a utopian vision of feminist research. For some of us, the growth toward a personal definition of feminist methodology has not contributed to a new set of guidelines but rather to a personal openness to differences in research approaches, e.g. quantitative combined with qualitative research (see Jayaratne, 1983).

A third challenge, is to see if the groups could become even more diversified than they currently are with regard to race, disciplinary affiliation, and academic rank of the members, and that with these differences products would emerge which would be shared among groups.

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